



The Virginia Saltwater Review

*Plans and Statistics Department
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<http://www.mrc.virginia.gov>*

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April 18, 2008

by

Department of Plans and Statistics, Fisheries Management Division

OVERVIEW

It is April, and another season of the Virginia Saltwater Review has begun. Those that took the winter off from fishing are now prepping for another year of phenomenal fishing opportunities here in the Commonwealth of Virginia. For those that did not take the winter off, the 'fish or die' crowd, there are plenty of fish stories to tell, and many will include the dreaded four letter word 'wind'! For one particular individual, Mr. Fredrick Barnes of Chesapeake, VA, he has a state record fishing story to tell involving a 73-pound striped bass caught January 23, 2008 at the 4A buoy near Virginia Beach (picture below). Of special note from VMRC, the record setting striped bass was a 22 year-old female, and we wish to thank Mr. Barnes and Mountain Breeze Taxidermy for their assistance in providing us access to the fish for the biological work-up.



For those individual anglers that caught the largest fish last year, Commissioner Steven G. Bowman presented the 2007 Virginia Saltwater Tournament largest fish awards at the 55th Annual Mid-Atlantic Boat Show on January 25, 2008. Many of our 2007 award-winning anglers were present, including Julie Ball, one of the Saltwater Reviews contributors who received an award for the largest bluefish and Susan M. Smith who received an award for the 63-pound, 1-ounce, king mackerel she caught in 2007, which was also a new state record! Of course, we must make note of one additional 2007 state record that is still a popular topic of conversation at presentations by VMRC staff, the monster 8-pound, 11-ounce, male croaker caught by Mr. Norman Jenkins last August. At eight years old, the croaker was four times the average size for other similarly aged croaker.



From left to right, Lewis Gillingham, Julie Ball, and Commissioner Steven G. Bowman



Susan M. Smith



Norman Jenkins and his record Croaker

The Virginia Recreational Assessment Program (http://mrc.virginia.gov/rec_assessment/index.shtml)

The Virginia Saltwater Fisherman's Journal

Before we move into the fishing reports, we want to remind you of some very important projects that are part of the Virginia Recreational Assessment Program. Remember, you can report your trophy striped bass catches (as required by regulation) to VMRC in various ways, including a mail-in sheet (see pages 9 and 10). However, why waste the stamp (postage is going up again anyway)? Register on the Virginia Saltwater Fisherman's Journal website and report your trophy striped bass directly, no paper, no stamps, no fuss. Also, we are in need of catch-and-release size information on red drum this year, which you can provide by using the fisherman's journal pages on the website. The information will be used in the upcoming 2009 red drum coastal stock assessment, whereas the only recreational information we have right now comes from MRFSS (Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey). Let's provide them data collected directly by the Virginia anglers!

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Recreational Fishing, Virginia Marine Resources Commission - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar displays "https://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com/main.php". The website content includes a header for the "Virginia Marine Resources Commission Recreational Fishing Online Reporting" with a logo. Below this is a large graphic for the "Virginia Recreational ASSESSMENT PROGRAM" featuring a fish skeleton. To the right, under "Recreational Saltwater Fishing", is a "Welcome Jgrist," message. A section titled "New 2008 Summer Flounder Regs" lists: "2008 Season Opens March 1", "Closed Season July 21 through July 30", "Minimum Size Limit 19 inches", and "Possession Limit 5 per person". Below that is an "Artificial Reef Map" section with a "Reef Map" button. At the bottom right is a "Report Trophy Striped Bass" section. On the left, a box dated "April 10, 2008" shows statistics: "Members: 1,361", "Trips: 227", and "Catches: 2,839". A "Related Links" section at the bottom left contains links to "Commonwealth of Virginia" and "Governor". The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button and several open applications: "Inbox - Microsoft Out...", "Recreational Fishing, ...", and "Microsoft PowerPoint ...". The system clock in the bottom right corner indicates "7:03 AM".

Recreational Fishing, Virginia Marine Resources Commission - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Yahoo! Tools Help

https://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com/main.php

Virginia Marine Resources Commission Recreational Fishing Online Reporting

Virginia Recreational ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Recreational Saltwater Fishing

Welcome Jgrist,

New 2008 Summer Flounder Regs

2008 Season Opens	March 1
Closed Season	July 21 through July 30
Minimum Size Limit	19 inches
Possession Limit	5 per person

Artificial Reef Map

Get GPS coordinates of all our artificial reefs in Virginia via Google Maps.

Two New Reefs Added: Poquoson and Bluefish Rock.

Reef Map

Report Trophy Striped Bass

Regulation 4VAC 20-252-10 ET SEQ. requires all striped bass kept during the trophy season be reported. Recording your trophy striped bass catch in this system meets Virginia's

April 10, 2008

Members: 1,361
Trips: 227
Catches: 2,839

Related Links

- Commonwealth of Virginia
- Governor

Done

start

Inbox - Microsoft Out... Recreational Fishing, ... Microsoft PowerPoint ...

www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

7:03 AM

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project

This project has already provided award tee shirts to over 140 anglers in the first six months of existence, and this year we will be adding on a new hat to the mix. There have been some slight changes to some of our project freezer locations, such as the relocation of the freezer from Wallace's Bait and Tackle around the corner to Bell Isle Marina. **We also would like to announce that location of another project freezer location, at Morningstar Marinas at Gwynn's Island (formerly known as the Gwynn's Island Boatel).**

We wish to thank the staff at Morningstar Marina, as well as one of our contributor's, Jerry Thrash at Queen's Creek Outfitters, for their assistance as this project expands in accessibility. We have also added two new species to the project collection list, king mackerel and citation sized bluefish (bluefish must be over 16 pounds or 36 inches and greater) (see page 11).

The VMRC Fishing Tournament Biological Sampling Team:

The VMRC's biological sampling team will be collecting important information from fish at the following two tournaments. Come out and watch, or better yet, participate in the tournament and allow the team to measure and remove the otoliths from the fish, and receive a reward tee-shirt or hat!

The 2nd Annual Black Drum World Championship Fishing Tournament, May 16-18, Cape Charles, VA
The 13th Annual Hampton Creek Cobia Tournament, June 13-15, Hampton, VA

THE FISHING REPORTS

Note from the Editor and staff: Many of our reporting stations are just reopening for business, so our fishing reports may be limited until all of our contributors are back in action.

Throughout the area, flounder are beginning to bite, and in the lower Bay, the tautog action is hot. Speckled trout are being caught in North Carolina, and everyone is getting excited about drum fishing on the Eastern Shore. It looks like another great season is upon us, so everyone get out and enjoy!

Chincoteague-

According to Donna at Captain Bob's, flounder have started running near Chincoteague. The hot spots are near the fingers on the north side of the Queen's Sound Bridge. Anglers, bundled up against chilly wind and water, are having luck fishing in 20 to 25 feet of water with minnows and squid.

Wachapreague –

Flounder are biting near Captain Zeds this week with six keepers (over 19 inches) reported. A 12-pound tautog was also caught last week. Anglers have had success by Green, Drawing, and Bulls Head Channels using minnows and squid.

Cape Charles -

Chris' Bait and Tackle reports two red drum release citations caught from the surf (50 inches and 48 inches). A 23-inch citation tautog was also released this week. Flounder fishing has picked up on the bayside of the Eastern Shore near Cape Charles, and on the seaside of the Eastern Shore near Oyster. Staff reports that fishing has been decent when the weather cooperates.

Staff at Cherrystone Bait and Tackle report no activity this week.

Onancock –

Captain Wil reports low water temperatures are keeping fishing at a minimum in Onancock this week. Croaker can be found in the creeks on warmer days, but the flounder have been slow to arrive. As temperatures warm and the winds die down, he expects a good croaker and flounder season this year. He also expects the puppy drum (juvenile red drum) to arrive by the first or second week in May.

Lower Bay/Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel –

Tautog citations were reported from Cobb's Marina this week. A 9-pound, 3-ounce tautog was caught by April Winter from North Carolina on April 11th, and a 10-pound, 5.5-ounce tautog was caught by David Thompson of Portsmouth on March 27th. Both were landed from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

Both Sunset Boating Center and Salt Ponds Marina reported very little fishing this week. Gusty winds and cool temperatures have kept many anglers from heading out.

According to staff at York River Fishing Center, the fishing action has been a little slow, but is starting to pick up around the York River. Flounder and croaker are beginning to bite.

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

Big red drum have arrived. As expected, the first citation-sized reds have been caught in the Eastern Shore surf. Black drum have also been caught, though none are large enough for citations yet. This fishery will really get going in a couple of weeks. The tautog bite is going full steam with excellent fishing on structures in the Bay and on inshore wrecks in the ocean. The Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel has been producing large numbers of tautog. Remember, the tautog season closes at the end of this month. Some good flounder catches have been made near the mouth of Back River. The Eastern Shore has had good flounder fishing on both the bayside and in the seaside inlets. The area of 36A near Cape Charles has been a good flounder spot. Flounder are being caught around the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, but so are a lot of spiny dogfish. Keeper-sized sea bass are available at the Tower Reef, the Triangle Reef and on other structures in the area. The best sea bass action still remains on structures further offshore, however. Croaker are being caught in the James, York and Rappahannock Rivers. Some puppy drum (juvenile red drum) and speckled trout are being caught inside Rudee and Lynnhaven Inlets. The Elizabeth River is also producing some fish. A few speckled trout have been caught in the Mobjack Bay area and this fishery should get better over the next couple of weeks. There have been some decent catches of yellowfin tuna out of Oregon Inlet

when the boats have been able to get out. Dolphin, wahoo, and a handful of billfish have also been caught by the offshore fleet.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

A recent break in the weather gave anglers a long awaited opportunity to test the spring fishing grounds, and they were not disappointed. Good action confirmed that the spring trend is right on track, and gaining momentum.

The newest spring player is a local favorite, the red drum. Bull reds are filing into their early season haunts along the breakers and white water of the Eastern Shore barrier islands and inlets. Kayakers are routinely known for having an edge over this fishery since they can often reach these treacherous areas with more ease than larger boats. David Austin of Richmond released 46-inch red while fishing the barrier islands this week. Although there have been no recreational hook and line catches of black drum as of yet, there are confirmed commercial reports from the Eastern Shore. The folks at Chris' Bait and Tackle predict the fish will show in numbers towards the end of the month or early May, and they will stock sea clams.

Flounder are still a mainstay, with good catches of keeper flatfish ranging to over seven pounds coming from various locations. The best flounder action is still at the bend at the third island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and along the Baltimore Channel in water ranging up to 45-feet. Scattered keepers are also hitting baits within Lynnhaven and Rudee Inlets. Along the Eastern Shore, good hauls are coming from the buoys along the bayside of Cape Charles, as well as Oyster and Wachapreague. The best enticement for these fish is fresh stripped bait paired with a gudgeon. Seven-year-old Madison Marek of Chesapeake subdued a fat 7-pound flattie while jigging a bucktail at the CBBT this week.

Puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are still hitting on lower bay structures and inside nearby inlets, with Rudee and Lynnhaven Inlets the best locations to try your luck. The Virginia Beach Fishing Center reports that folks are having good success using finger mullet and jig heads tipped with grubs. The arrival of Taylor blues within Rudee Inlet is thrilling surf casters throwing from the rocks. Speckled trout are also available in both Rudee and Lynnhaven, with fish pushing five pounds hitting sinking twitch bait lures such as the Mirrolure and the Yozuri Live Bait Minnow. P.J. Visser of Virginia Beach landed a nice 5-pounder while working Rudee Inlet this week. Bluefish averaging 7 to 8-pounds are also schooling around the Chesapeake Light Tower.

Croaker are showing in various areas in the Bay, especially near Willoughby, Ocean View, and off the Little Creek Jetties. Preston at the Ocean View Fishing Pier reports good catches of croaker in the evenings, with anglers filling up coolers with medium-sized fish. A few round head catches are also adding some variety from the pier. The bigger hardheads are still coming from the lower bay rivers where shrimp and squid are making the mark.

Good hauls of tautog continue to come from lower bay and inshore structures where anglers are finding keeper fish with a few citations in the mix. Fiddler crabs and green crabs are working well as bait. Deeper wrecks are also a good bet for big fish, but anglers are finding few windows in the weather to access them. The black seabass are beginning to migrate closer to shore, where the

Triangle Wrecks will provide decent fish right now. Blueline tilefish are also available in water over 50 fathoms when you can get to them.

Offshore action out of Carolina is good when boats can get out. Boats are scoring with wahoo, yellowfin tuna, blackfin tuna, along with some dolphin and kings. For more information, go to www.drjball.com.

Virginia Middle Bay –

Jetts Hardware, Smith Point Marina, and Locklies Marina reported little activity so far this year, probably due to all of the wind we have been seeing lately.

Garrett's Marina is reporting good catches of croaker up to 19 inches in the shallows (approximately 4-5 feet of water). The bait of choice has been squid and shrimp.

Virginia Beach –

Speckled trout are reported from the Virginia Beach Fishing Center. Flounder are also coming into the inlet (some are being caught up to 22 inches). Those fishing near the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel are seeing increases in flounder as well, and bluefish are being landed near the Chesapeake Light Tower.

Fisherman's Wharf Marina reports little to no activity this week due to weather.

Outer Banks, NC –

Water temperatures warmed to the low 50's this week at the Avalon Pier in Nags Head, and the fish are starting to respond. Catches of speckled trout (with some in the 2 to 3 pound range) have been reported by anglers using jigs. Other species including bluefish, shad and puffers (aka blowtoads) are giving anglers something to chase as well.

Offshore fishermen working out of Oregon Inlet have had to pick and choose their days due to the wind, but for those who brave the elements, there have been some nice catches of dolphin, scattered tuna (yellowfin and blackfin), wahoo, king mackerel and even a blue marlin release. Deep bottom fishing has produced tilefish and sea bass. People fishing closer to shore have also been able to find some sea bass.

Surf fishermen working the areas south of Oregon Inlet have had success when the weather has cooperated. Some puppy drum (juvenile red drum) were spotted just north of Cape Hatteras, with a larger drum mixed in. Sea mullet were seen at ramps 43 and 44, and puffers and bluefish were caught on both sides of Cape Hatteras as well. Flounder were seen on the south side, and dogfish were also making a strong showing on the point of Cape Hatteras.

IMPORTANT RECREATIONAL REGULATION CHANGES TO REMEMBER FOR 2008

TAUTOG

[\[Regulation 4 VAC 20-960-10 et seq.\]](#)

Minimum Size Limit.....14 inches

Possession Limit.....4 per person

Closed Season: May 1 through June 24



SUMMER FLOUNDER

[\[Regulation 4 VAC 20-620-10 et seq.\]](#)

2008 Season OpensMarch 1

Closed Season.....July 21 through July 30

Minimum Size Limit.....19 inches

Possession Limit.....5 per person

The above flounder restrictions apply to Virginia tidal waters, except that in Virginia's Potomac River tributaries the minimum size limit, closed season, and possession limit will be the same as established by [PRFC](#) for the mainstem Potomac River.



If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's [THE SALTWATER REVIEW](#) as the source of the fishing information.

2008 STRIPED BASS RECREATIONAL TROPHY REPORT

FORM

**THIS REPORT MUST BE FILLED OUT AND MAILED OR HAND
DELIVERED TO VMRC NO LATER THAN JUNE 30, 2008.**

Each fisherman, captain, or boat operator is responsible for complying with all restrictions and requirements contained in regulation 4VAC 20-252-10 ET SEQ. Regulation 4VAC 20-252-10 ET SEQ. requires all striped bass kept during the trophy season be reported.

**** This page is for summary purposes only ****

FISHING SEASONS: Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries--May 1 (12:01 AM) - June 15 (11:59 PM), 2008
Coastal Virginia waters--May 1 (12:01 AM) - May 15 (11:59 PM), 2008
Potomac River tributaries--April 19 (12:01 AM) - May 15 (11:59 PM), 2008

TROPHY POSSESSION SIZE: 32-inch minimum; except for Potomac River Tributaries, where there is a 28 minimum.

POSSESSION LIMIT: 1 trophy-size fish per person. When fishing from a boat or vessel, where the entire catch is held in a common hold or container, the possession limit shall be for the boat or vessel and shall be equal to the number of persons on board, legally eligible to fish, multiplied by the applicable personal possession limit. The captain or operator of the boat or vessel shall be responsible for any boat or vessel possession limit.

GEAR: Hook and Line fishing only

NO SALE OF HOOK & LINE CAUGHT STRIPED BASS

NO POSSESSION of Trophy striped bass in the spawning reaches (defined below) May 1 through June 15.

- James River - from a line connecting Dancing Point and New Sunken Meadow Creek upstream to a line connecting City Point and Packs Point.
- Pamunkey River - from the Route 33 Bridge at West Point upstream to a line connecting Liberty Hall and the opposite shore.
- Mattaponi River - from the Route 33 Bridge at West Point upstream to the Route 360 Bridge at Aylett.
- Rappahannock River - from the Route 360 Bridge at Tappahannock upstream to the Route 1 Bridge at Falmouth.
- Alteration of striped bass while aboard any boat or vessel or while fishing from shore or pier so that total length cannot be determined is prohibited.
- Spearing or gaffing or attempting to spear or gaff striped bass is prohibited.
- Transfer of any striped bass to another person while on the water or while fishing from a pier or shore is prohibited.
- Striped bass fishing is prohibited in Federal waters (beyond the Virginia three-mile limit line).

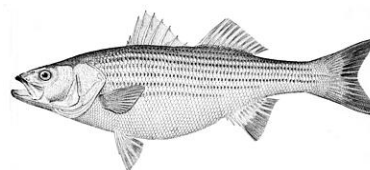
REPORT FORM HELPFUL HINTS:

- You must include length information on each trophy size striped bass that is kept.
- VMRC would appreciate any length information on striped bass that are released, please see the other side of this form.
- Lengths are total lengths in inches (to nearest 1/4 inch). Total length is measured in a straight line from tip of nose to tip of tail.
- Weights (in pounds) are optional
- TO REPORT REGULATION VIOLATIONS: 1-800-541-4646
- TROPHY REPORTING QUESTIONS: 1-800-937-9247

RETURN FORM TO:

**VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
PLANS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT
2600 WASHINGTON AVENUE, 3RD FLOOR
NEWPORT NEWS VA 23607-0756**

On-line reporting is available:



www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

2008 RECREATIONAL TROPHY STRIPED BASS SEASON REPORT FORM

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

NAME: _____

(USE AS MANY FORMS AS NECESSARY)

DATE	WATER BODY WHERE FISH WERE CAUGHT	NUMBER OF STRIPED BASS CAUGHT	NUMBER OF STRIPED BASS KEPT

MANDATORY - FISH KEPT			OPTIONAL - RELEASED FISH		
DATE	LENGTH to 1/4-inch (MANDATORY)	WEIGHT (IF AVAILABLE)	DATE	LENGTH	WEIGHT













ATTENTION SALTWATER ANGLERS! **THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES** **COMMISSION WANTS YOUR FISH....** **TO MEASURE AND AGE**



You catch it, you fillet it, but instead of throwing the remains in the trash, please donate them to science.

Website: http://mrc.virginia.gov/rec_assessment/index.shtm

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA		RED DRUM	
SHEEPSHEAD		BLACK DRUM	
SPADEFISH		TAUTOG	
TILEFISH		GROUPER	
KING MACKEREL		BLUEFISH (OVER 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)	

In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a **FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT FOR EACH PARTICIPANT.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

Bell Isle Marine (Hampton)

Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)

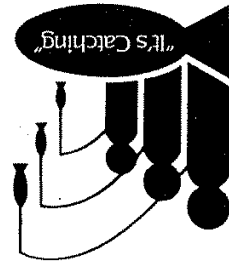
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)

Morningstar Marina – Gwynn's Island (formerly known as the Gwynn's Island Boatel)

As of 04/18/2008

FIRST CLASS MAIL

TAKE A FRIEND FISHING



FISHERIES PLANS/STATISTICS OFFICE
VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
2600 WASHINGTON AVE., 3RD FLOOR
NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA 23607

Practice

CAREFUL CATCH

REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH

Exhaustion * Loss of Slime * Wounds * Time out of Water